

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

SESSION NOTES:

Committee Objective

The purpose of the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee is to provide strategic advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on topics and issues affecting the mutual provision of DEED/VRS and CRP/LUV services to Minnesotans with disabilities. Our efforts to understand issues and to work collaboratively will build and nurture the capacity of Minnesota's rehabilitation community to advance the employment, independent living and community integration of Minnesotans with disabilities.

Specifically, the VRS Community Rehabilitation Program Advisory Committee will:

- Represent the perspectives and interests of CRP/LUVs in advancing rehabilitation and employment issues while fostering dialogue and engagement on critical issues throughout the greater rehabilitation community
- Promote innovative service practices to accelerate the adoption of best practices at a systems level that fosters equitable access to quality services on a statewide basis
- Provide strategic level advice and consultation to DEED/VRS on matters affecting CRP/LUVs
- Identify key topics and issues affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS
- Consider input from subject matter experts in issues affecting economic development, state demographics / population trends, and promising practices
- Engage in active reflection, spirited discussion and strategic dialogue on critical topics affecting CRP/LUVs and DEED/VRS services to persons with disabilities in Minnesota
- Provide a forum for the review and discussion of critical VRS and CRP service delivery topics including, but not limited to: current service delivery practices; new and emerging service needs; identifying best practices; and the consideration of statewide service needs and resources

2015 Community Partner Members (*listed alphabetically*): Heather Deutschlaender, Wendy DeVore, Kelly Dilger, Jeremy Gurney, Josh Howie, Amanda Jensen-Stahl, Dan Meyers, Nick Monson, Julie Peterschick, Robert Reedy and Lynn Vincent

VRS Members: Jay Hancock and Lori Thorpe

Sponsor: Kim Peck, VRS Director

Co-leaders: Chris McVey and Jan Thompson

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

2015 Schedule: Feb 27, Mar 27, Apr 24, May 29, Sep 25, Oct 23, and Dec 4.

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

May 29, 2015 Session Objectives:

- ★ Post action review and reflection on the April CRP Advisory meeting regarding the challenges facing VRS related to increasing service demands and resource constraints.
- ★ Provide an update on legislative issues impacting Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the greater vocational rehabilitation community.
- ★ Facilitate an advisory planning discussion for autumn 2015 regional community partnership meetings and launch regional planning teams.
- ★ Provide a conduit for sharing relevant, important and timely updates and information for the benefit of vocational rehabilitation community and consumers

May 29 2015 Attendees (*listed alphabetically*): Wendy DeVore, Kelly Dilger, Jeremy Gurney, Jay Hancock, Josh Howie, Amanda Jensen-Stahl, Dan Meyers, Chris McVey, Kim Peck, Julie Peterschick, Robert Reedy, Holly Sunderman, Jan Thompson, Lori Thorpe and Lynn Vincent

Not in attendance: Heather Deutschlaender

Facilitator: Holly Johnson

Agenda Topics:

1. Welcome / Overview
2. Advisory Update: Legislative Topics
3. Advisory Post Action Review and Reflection: Messaging and Communication during the Transformation of Employment Services
4. Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics
5. Advisory Planning: Autumn 2015 Regional Partners Meetings
6. Wrap Up: Key Messages from Today

Adjourn @ 3pm

Meeting Highlights:

- The Advisory Committee discussed the importance of calm, honest communication in the face of current and forecast significant changes resulting from the Minnesota Olmstead Plan and the draft WIOA regulations.
- The committee discussed statewide and regional topics to jumpstart planning for the proposed fall 2015 regional community partnership meetings.

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

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Next Steps:

- **Session Key Messages for Committee Use and Sharing:** The facilitator will draft the session key messages and email to VRS Director Kim Peck for immediate distribution to the CRP Advisory Committee for communication purposes. Note: the key messages are also provided on final pages of these complete session notes.
- **Document Session Notes:** The facilitator will document the session notes for VRS Co-leadership review and approval for distribution to key audiences including the CRP Advisory Committee, VRS, and CRP/LUV partners.
- **Next Meeting:** The Advisory Committee does not meet during the summer months. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 25th

Welcome and Opening

The committee opened with a welcome by co-leads Chris McVey and Jan Thompson. Chris announced that Amanda Jensen-Stahl of Goodwill Easter Seals of Minnesota has accepted a position within the VRS Extended Employment Program. Two of the three existing EE Program staff will be retiring in the next few years. Chris and Jan thanked Amanda for her service on the committee as a CRP representative and welcomed her to the VRS organization.

Facilitator Holly Johnson asked advisory committee members to provide any edits for the April 24th session notes by end of the month to finalize for posting.

Advisory Update: Legislative Topics

Kim Peck provided an update on the Governor's veto letter that impacts several agencies including DEED. In his letter, Governor Dayton makes specific mention of insufficient resources in the Jobs and Energy Bill to support both IPS and the EE program. He also noted the insufficient resources for the Olmstead Plan and included these items as stated priorities for a special session.

Kim shared her disappointment that employment services programs did not fare as well as hoped this season especially in light of the surplus budget condition. She asked the advisory committee for their ideas on what we might do differently as a VR community in the future to be more effective in securing the support needed by people with disabilities in Minnesota. Efforts are underway to negotiate between the House and Senate bills to reconcile the differences. MOHR has sent a letter to the Governor asking to insert a piece legislation and believes the veto may provide an opportunity to re-engage with the legislature for increase funding support.

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Meanwhile, in preparation for potential partial government shutdown, DEED will be submitting a categorization of its services to Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) as required. Within DEED, Unemployment Insurance will be likely deemed priority category one and will continue to stay open if a shutdown occurs.

Approximately 9,500 state employees will be sent layoff notices next Monday as required for the partial government shutdown. Kim outlined the criteria for what services would be open due to priority one service e.g. correctional guards for public safety.

Kim noted that during the last state shutdown in 2011, there were impacts to CRPs including some provider layoffs. There is no guarantee that services during a shutdown period will be paid retroactively. Similar to last time, VRS will send out a communication with the contract and operational impacts related to reimbursements for services under contract by VRS during the shutdown period should it occur.

Members of the advisory noted that we have been down this road before and that the strengthened working relationships among the state VRS program and the statewide network of CRP/LUV providers help get us all through stressful times and conditions.

Advisory Post Action Review and Reflection: Messaging and Communication during the Transformation of Employment Services

Following the legislative updates, VRS State Director Kim Peck revisited the April 21st advisory discussion on the increased requirements creating pressure on VRS and the entire system in the context of constrained VRS resources and funding forecasts. Kim shared the information with the advisory with the intentions of providing an honest and transparent understanding of the challenges VRS is facing so that the CRP/LUV community is aware of the pressures and potential implications for VRS services as well as impacts for employment services system wide.

Unfortunately, information from the meeting was subsequently shared in a way that created concerns, and in a few cases, panic among providers who were alarmed by what they heard from colleagues on the advisory. The unexpected flurry of concerns led Kim to clear her calendar and set up a meeting with concerned CRPs. Kim asked the advisory if sharing information on potential scenarios before they are an actual reality was a mistake given the unnecessary panic that resulted after the meeting that required VRS time to address. A number of the CRP representatives on the committee said that they appreciated the transparency VRS has given to the challenges and understood the need to help ensure communications are supported with calm accuracy in periods of uncertainty.

Kim asked the advisory for suggestions on how to reduce the potential for similar miscommunication in the future and to speak with a more unified voice in matters that impact the greater vocational rehabilitation program throughout the state.

Lynn Vincent said she appreciates Kim's willingness to share important information because it helps CRPs with staff planning and hiring. She said her staff were

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

concerned based on what they were hearing from VRS counselors. Kim and Jan Thompson noted that they will work with field leaders to help staff understand and communicate VRS challenges in a constructive manner.

Robert Reedy and Dan Meyers said that they believe panicking providers jumped from the potential of closure to closure despite being told it was a potential and not a reality. Robert suggested that having 'talking points' in a written form from VRS to share with others would be helpful to CRP members. Josh Howie agreed that being able to point to a document and know that the source is VRS would give credibility and increase the likelihood of information being received as intended.

Kim noted that going forward VRS will work with the CRP Advisory Committee to develop key messages at the end of each meeting. The facilitator Holly Johnson said that at the end of the day's session, they will develop key messages together and that Kim would review and edit the draft key messages as needed before sending out to the CRP Advisory distribution list within 1-2 business days after each meeting. Members agreed that this would be helpful going forward.

Kim noted that at various times in history, the VR community has experienced other times of ambiguity and uncertainty and that she remains confident that no matter what happens VRS is committed to rising to the challenges with leadership and support for the shared mission of serving Minnesotans with the most significant disabilities in their efforts for competitive employment, self sufficiency and community integration. Kim stated her understanding that staff may be concerned about their jobs however her expectation is that they maintain a positive and optimistic view of the future.

She also noted that unlike some other periods in history, the greater VR community is operating with a higher level of trust and collaboration among many of the partners and across much of the state. She stated her belief that as the state designated steward of the federal VR funding, VRS prefers to engage and partner with the system as much as possible to make the most of the dollars entrusted to the state.

Kim reiterated that VRS is doing all they can to keep Category One open for as long as possible. While VRS will apply for federal re-allotment dollars if they become available there are no guarantees that Minnesota will be awarded additional dollars. She assured the advisory that she and her leadership team are monitoring case services very closely and will continue to make every effort to keep category one open, to inform the advisory of status, and to continue efforts to secure additional resources for system capacity. She will continue to keep the advisory informed of critical issues.

Another pressure point on VRS relates to the new WIOA draft regulations which include expanded responsibilities for pre-employment transition youth services and puts VRS in a "gatekeeper role" for youth with disabilities who are considering work in a subminimum job and adults who are already working in a subminimum job. VRS is in the process of analyzing the draft regulations and preparing a response for the 60-day public comment period that is open through June 15.

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Currently, VRS must set aside resources to determine eligibility for services and if so what category. VRS is required to have resources to see the existing plans to completion. Staff and partners continue to do good work with outcomes however when it comes to referrals, they may be slowing down. Kim reiterated that VRS is not trying to be "hysterical" and there is no "date" for closing category one. Based on current projections and barring something unforeseen, VRS estimates adequate fiscal resources to sustain the program through this federal fiscal year (end of September).

In a nutshell, VRS is facing a sobering, stark reality. It's a place we've been before and we believe that having open communication is vital to the entire VR community of CRPs/LUVs. It requires careful attention to communication by everyone given the high level of uncertainty and changes impacting the system. Kim thanked the advisory for the reflection and promised that the advisory will have more conversations about how to continue to talk about these things.

She spoke of the critical importance and opportunity of the VRS CRP Advisory Committee's leadership role in promoting greater community calm and clarity during this period of great change and uncertainty. She asked the group to be thoughtful and careful with the information that is shared and to be proactive in thinking about the best ways to communicate beyond the committee. Given the constant fact that "there is always stuff that happens", Kim looks to this advisory group for support in communicating to help the rehabilitation community understand the nuances of the messages. While potential scenarios could happen, it is vital that the community understands that leaders are diligently monitoring and working on the issues to minimize any negative impacts to providers and consumers alike.

Lynn Vincent commented that creating FAQs on the big change forces such as WIOA and the Minnesota Olmstead Plan would be helpful so that CRP staff could use the information to address situations where people are "talking around the cooler" and rumors/misinformation can be easily spread.

Wendy DeVore said as a newer CRP Advisory member she appreciates the calm leadership and demeanor with which issues are presented at the CRP advisory meetings. She noted that every organization has people who are more 'even keeled' as well as those who are quicker to panic. She suggested that enlisting those who are more prone to the even keeled response in messaging would be a good strategy for member organizations to consider. Wendy said that she first starts with keeping her own sense of calm realizing that how she responds impacts the people around her.

Kim agreed with Wendy's strategy of enlisting 'informal' leaders in CRP organizations and said she views the VRS CRP Advisory in a similar but more formal way. Robert added that part of the shared message is that this is an evolving situation, we're aware and this is what we're doing in the meantime so that we can address what many community members experience as a "safety" issue.

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Chris McVey noted that people seem to appreciate opportunities when they can hear from Kim Peck directly. Wendy asked whether Kim could appear in a webinar so participants could benefit from her calming demeanor as well as ask and hear directly from the State Designated Unit for the public VR program regarding their questions.

Jay Hancock believes that we're on the right track and that it has been his experience that other government organizations do not share this type or level of information with partners/providers. Julie Peterschick added that because she has been through the previous shutdown she knows that we will get through whatever comes our way however she knows that there are many others who have not been through this before. She added that for newer staff it is important to message 'this isn't permanent, it's not forever'. Others agreed.

Holly noted that with the upcoming Advisory Committee's summer hiatus, CRP members should let Kim, Jan and Chris know if they are hearing misinformation and/or questions so VRS can help get information where needed as timely as possible. Chris added that in addition to VRS staff, she hopes that CRPs will feel comfortable looking at the CRP Advisory Committee membership roster and feel comfortable reaching out to whoever they wish. Lynn concluded the discussion affirming that we all want to know what's going on and that sharing little pieces as we learn along the way continues to keep communication channels open and healthy.

Vocational Rehabilitation Community Topics

❖ **CRP updates:**

- Amanda Jensen-Stahl
 - **Goodwill Easter Seals** has begun an IPS collaboration with Zumbro Valley Mental Health. The effort is an attempt to try something new with an outside Mental Health provider in order to serve more people with the IPS model.
 - Kim inquired as to how Goodwill was funding the work. The effort is being funded via PBA in coordination with the local VRS RAM Jodi Yanda utilizing an existing counselor capacity. Chris McVey noted that IPS resources are extremely stretched so projects are evaluated on a case by case basis.
 - Goodwill Easter Seals held their annual event called 'The Power of Work'.
- Jeremy Gurney:
 - **Opportunity Services** - Jeremy attended a recognition event for Judge Donovan Frank who was recognized by ARC with an honorary award for his social justice work.

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

- Robert Reedy:
 - **Rise, Inc.** has a new case management system expected to roll out in early August that has been taking a lot of staff time.
 - Robert met with Hennepin County regarding a long term SMI contract which has transitioned services over time from sheltered to community based to IPS. Referencing the success of IPS, Robert asked the county about their willingness to invest in supporting IPS with county funding and for the first time, they said they are interested. Robert believes that if we can bring more resources in then we can increase our capacity. Hennepin county has approximately 6,000 people that need help and the IPS projects are hitting critical mass. Robert was very encouraged to see the county staff willing to get onboard with IPS support. He is working with RAMs Ken Lundquist and Thant Pearson of the South and North Minneapolis VRS Offices to figure out the details. Robert said that whatever Rise Inc. does will include working with VRS understanding the constraints on counselors capacity to serve given existing burgeoning case loads. He said that any expanded effort has to work for all the partners.
- Julie Peterschick:
 - **Productive Alternatives Inc.** will host their second mental health training on June 8 in Fergus Falls covering the framework. 45 people are registered for the event. The first training, also hosted in Fergus Falls, was very successful.
- Josh Howie:
 - **Trillium Works!** has a new Occupational Communication Specialist (OCS). Sunny Peterson has been working with DHH (Sign Language Proficiency Interview) and has passed with "advanced" certification level.
 - Kim Peck noted that this skill proficiency is a rare and valuable service. She thanked Trillium Works for supporting that capacity in their staff
- Wendy DeVore:
 - **Career Ventures Inc. (CVI)** - Wendy shared the highlights from a whirlwind week in Kingston Jamaica where CVI worked with a local CRP that serves 30 individuals including six who are deaf. CVI worked with a number of different entities during the visit and is trying to develop an exchange program between their organizations to facilitate opportunities for CVI deaf students to experience a work and volunteer exchange at the deaf school, and then have deaf students from Jamaica for two weeks here in Minnesota. CVI would be sponsoring the visits. Wendy said they learned that a lot of youth in Jamaica go abroad for experience and while there are some funds that support youth, deaf students have not been included in that opportunity. The tentative timeline for the exchange is April and August 2016. They are working on

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

planning and securing the funding. In addition, Wendy said they are hoping to bring some of Jamaican staff along as part of the exchange to teach other approaches that could be incorporated into CVI's services.

❖ **DEED/VRS updates:**

- Jay Hancock, VRS Regional Manager for South/Central Region
 - The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) held a listening session in Marshall, Minnesota composed of two panels on economic development and employment covering a nine county area. Jay said the session was well attended and included the sharing of compelling personal experiences. He said the inspiring experiences shared served as an important refresher on why we do this work. Whenever the SRC holds these sessions, one is hosted in greater MN and another is hosted in the metro area. Kim noted that the SRC uses forums to gather information for needs assessment as part of their council responsibilities. The listening session locations are one way to acknowledge and gain a better understanding of the work differences in greater MN and in the metro.
- Jan Thompson, VRS Field Director:
 - Statewide Caseload Data from *10/01/2014 to 05/28/2015*:
 - **Employment Activities and Outcomes:** Last year this time we had 2,032 outcomes. This year we are excited about being at 2,119 outcomes. Applications have increased .81% since 2014FFY. Acceptances have increased by 27.6% since same date FFY2014 with employment plans up from 2014 by 28.7%. Employment outcomes are up 4.39%. Expenditures for assessment are down by about 5.75% so the direction of VR services toward rapid engagement and employment planning which decreases lengthy assessments appears to be paying off freeing up funds for other services.
 - **Open caseload:** We are currently working with 12,556 persons with disabilities. Transition cases are 37.4% of open cases. Given the seasonal aspect, we expect that work with transition youth will pick up dramatically. We are looking at paid work experiences which are not considered employment outcomes for count purposes but that we know they are vital for employment success as adults. WIOA requires VR to work more intensively with students in high school before they graduate.
 - **Waiting list:** 317 people are on the waiting list as of today.

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

- Kim Peck, VRS Director
 - **The Minnesota Olmstead Plan** The latest submitted plan was rejected by Judge Donovan Frank. The Judge has established an expectation for a revised version to be submitted to the court by July 10th. VRS challenges around the Plan continue and there is not a lot we're able to do to transform the system in order to impact the numbers to the degree that the Judge is looking for without additional implementation resources and system capacity enhancements.
 - **Extended Employment Rule Revision** We are actively engaged in the revision of the EE Rule. We were able to get policy language of the reconfiguration in one bill that moves the program from three to two "pots of monies" for competitive and non-competitive employment supports. We are currently working on capping EE dollars that support non-competitive employment in line with WIOA and Olmstead Plan requirements. The biggest transformations needed are those in the counties funded by the waivers. While VRS does not have authority to control this portion of the transformation work, we are trying to influence the work of the Interagency Employment Panel to assist with that critical piece.
 - **WIOA Draft Regulations** The public comment period closes June 15th so if CRPs/LUVs haven't provided input, do so before the deadline. VRS staff are compiling analysis and response on the substantive changes in the draft regulations including requirements for pre-employment transition services, competitive employment and the proposed 'gatekeeper' responsibilities.
- Chris McVey, VRS Director of Strategic Initiatives and Partnerships
 - **IPS National Learning Collaborative** Key DEED-VRS & DHS staff attended the Dartmouth's IPS National Learning Collaborative conference from May 26th-28th. Minnesota is one of 18 states that participate in the collaborative. Attendees included Chris McVey and DEED-VRS Mental Health Specialist Claire Courtney. Chris shared that most states are struggling to identify sustainable funding sources for IPS services. There were a number of sessions on Medicaid funding options and Minnesota was represented at each of those sessions. We have leadership at DHS that understands the IPS funding challenges in Minnesota and is taking a look at Medicaid funding. DEED-VRS is also working on two IPS related action items on the Olmstead Plan that are due to the court on June 30. If we do not receive funding from the legislature, we will be forced to revert from our current 23 projects back to six projects. With the looming special session and the Governor's specific mention of IPS funding needs, we are hopeful that funds will be designated for IPS. Work is also continuing to enlist the greater mental health community to better understand and value employment as part of recovery. Chris said

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

that everyone who attended the IPS National learning collaborative meetings returned with renewed energy to increase support for IPS in Minnesota.

- **Minnesota IPS Conference Planned for Oct 6-7, 2015** Planning for a statewide IPS Conference for project participants is underway. The conference is intended for all IPS practitioners and field leaders including DEED-VRS counselors, CRP Employment Specialists and mental health practitioners as well as managers who support IPS Projects. A central Minnesota location is expected.
- **Next Generation Placement Launching Statewide** First rollout meeting will be on June 3 in Cambridge and conclude June 30th with the statewide roll out completed by July 1.
- **SGA Project Expected to Launch first week of August** The University of Massachusetts, Boston Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI) has selected Minnesota as one of three states that will test a research protocol which focuses on three key areas: Rapid Engagement, Business Engagement and Financial Education. We are hopeful that the results of this 12-month research study will reflect more individuals on SSDI moving off of benefits and out of poverty. Eight VRS teams comprise the treatment teams and the other nine teams comprise the control teams

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM
VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Advisory Planning: Autumn 2015 Regional Partners Meetings

The facilitator began the advisory planning session with a brief review of the February discussion on recreating the community partners meetings. The committee renewed their commitment to the proposed advisory co-leadership structure for autumn 2015 regional meetings - one each for the North, Metro and South/Central regions.

The planning discussion focused on state and regional ideas for meeting content, logistics, etc. Regional Planning teams will be convened by the VRS Regional Manager for each region. The initial regional planning teams created are as follows and will be further developed as needed. All CRP Advisory Committee members are expected to assist in their regional planning team:

Metro Regional: Rehabilitation System Partners Meeting

- *Planning Team: Dee Torgerson (VRS Regional Manager), Heather Deutchlaender, Dan Meyers, Robert Reedy, Wendy DeVore, and Lynn Vincent*

South Central Regional: Partners Meeting

- *Planning Team: Jay Hancock (VRS Regional Manager), Jeremy Gurney, and Amanda Jensen-Stahl. Others TBD. Holly Sunderman will be on parental leave.*

North Regional: Partners Meeting

- *Planning Team: Roland Root (VRS Regional Manager), Julie Peterschick, Josh Howie, Kelly Dilger, and Lori Thorpe.*

Potential purpose and scope of meetings:

1. VRS updates and directions based upon WIOA and Other Strategic Change

Drivers: sharing information related to major forces such as the new federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Minnesota Olmstead Plan (and the national scene) and the Extended Employment (EE) Rule Revision. VRS impacts to the VR and EE programs and to a lesser degree on the third VRS program - Independent Living (IL). Specific areas of interest brainstormed included:

- a. an overview of WIOA changes
- b. the new VRS "gatekeeper role" (focused on subminimum wage certificate holders)
- c. pre-employment transition youth services (PETS)
- d. informed choice definitions and processes per the Department of Justice and Olmstead Plan
- e. example scenarios of various consumer experiences that involve key partners and how they interact
- f. how VRS is preparing for the July 2016 effective date (potential breakout)

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

- 2. Focus on consumer impact - sharing innovation and best practices:**
 - a. sharing of examples of success meeting needs and requirements
 - b. what are the innovative practices that partners are using to increase competitive employment?
 - c. what are the challenges?
 - d. showcasing of consumers who have utilized partner services from county, VRS, IL, ARMS, etc.
- 3. Understanding DHS impacts from HCBS:** potential DHS presenter
- 4. Managing through the changes and uncertainties of the Employment Services world:**
 - a. How do we hold and practice an ongoing community conversation for better understanding and problem-solving?
 - b. What are the opportunities to meet and work together at the intersections?
 - c. What and how will the changes impact our consumers? their support systems?
- 5. Building community connections and working relationships across the system:**
 - a. What's working well? What would make it even better?
 - b. Where are we struggling and how can we address the challenges?

Next steps:

1. Regional planning teams should hold their initial meeting no later than June 30th. Important logistics to be determined include:
 - **Develop preliminary location and block of time for regional meeting** - what are the location options within the region? how much time can we plan? are locations accessible to those in the region? what is the potential for technology connection for those attending virtually?
 - **Statewide and regional meeting objectives and topics priorities** - what should the meeting objectives and agenda include? who needs to be involved in presenting/co-presenting the various components? what content is consistent for all three regional meetings and what is unique?
 - **Invitees/attendees** - given the meeting objectives and topics, who are the most appropriate invitees? what is the capacity of the spaces we can secure? what is the mix of partners? do we include partners beyond VRS and CRP/LUVs? what type of experience do we want to create and what does that suggest for the number of attendees we should target - both minimum and maximum? Who do we need to bring together to discuss the connections needed to address the local/regional needs?

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM

VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

- **Potential process approaches:**
 - A portion of the meeting devoted to full group information sharing
 - A portion of the meeting for small groups for processing the full group information and/or discussion of different topics.
- **A few planning parameters:**
 - VRS cannot pay for food at the meetings.
 - VRS can assist with securing locations.

DEED / VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM
VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

Key Messages for the Greater Vocational Rehabilitation Community:

Potential Partial Government Shutdown:

With the Governor's veto of the omnibus jobs and energy bill, DEED is one of the agencies facing a potential partial government shutdown. If a resolution to the current impasse cannot be developed before June 30, 2015 when the current state fiscal year ends, VRS will be shutdown until a resolution is reached. I know that the government shutdown of 2011 remains fresh in everyone's mind.

As part of the Governor's veto letter, Governor Dayton specifically called attention to the need for greater support for the IPS Program, the Extended Employment Program and the Minnesota Olmstead Plan. We know many of you are directly participating in these employment services and we are hopeful that resources can be secured to allow these important programs to continue providing effective and important services for Minnesotans with disabilities.

While I know it would be futile to tell you to not worry, I want you to know that I am optimistic that a shutdown can be averted. Circumstances today are very different than what was happening four years ago and the Governor and his team are already hard at work in discussions with legislative leaders to resolve the outstanding issues. DEED is taking part in the required contingency planning for a possible partial government shutdown. You can view updates at bereadymn.com<<http://bereadymn.com>> as they become available. Affected DEED/VRS staff will be sent furlough notices on June 1st as required contractually by labor agreement and state HR policies.

Again, I am optimistic that things will be resolved soon and we will be able to direct all of our energy into the noble work of assisting Minnesotans with disabilities achieve their goals for employment, independent living and community integration.

Announcing Fall 2015 Regional Partners Meetings:

Efforts are underway to develop regional partners meetings for this fall. There will be one meeting developed for each region. Dates and locations have not yet been determined.

Regional planning teams composed of both VRS and CRP members will co-plan and co-host these meetings. Planning teams will begin meeting in June. If you have ideas on potential meeting sites or want to help in your region, please contact the VRS Regional Manager in your area. VRS Regional Managers will provide leadership for the planning teams as follows:

- Northern Region Partners Meeting: Roland Root
- Metro Region Partners Meeting: Dee Torgerson
- South/Central Region Partners Meeting: Jay Hancock

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VRS COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, MAY 29, 2015—9:00 AM—3:00 PM
VRS WOODBURY OFFICE / HUDSON CONFERENCE ROOM

We believe that nothing replaces the positive power of face to face conversations. Stay tuned for more information as planning progresses.

And finally... with the arrival of summer, the VRS CRP Advisory Committee will once again go on break. Our next meeting is scheduled for Friday, September 25. In the meantime, have a great summer and thanks for all that you do.

Kim Peck
State Director, DEED / Vocational Rehabilitation Services

** End of session notes*